

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A device for controlling telephone usage, comprising:
 - a switch coupled between a telephone line and a telephone wherein the switch completes a circuit between the telephone line and the telephone to allow a phone call to proceed when in a first position and obstructs a circuit between the telephone line and telephone to prevent a phone call from proceeding when in a second position;
 - a reference clock;
 - a processor operatively coupled to the reference clock and the switch, the processor being configured to control the position of the switch based on a comparison of a time reference to a time from the reference clock, and
 - a delay input element configured:
 - to receive an input indicating a delay request when the circuit between the telephone line and telephone is about to be obstructed; and
 - to delay obstructing the circuit between the telephone line and telephone upon receiving the input~~override the processor control of the switch when the delay element is activated.~~
2. (Original) The device of claim 1, further comprising a memory configured to store the time reference, the memory being operatively coupled to the processor.
3. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein the time reference is an amount of time that a call may proceed and wherein the processor causes the switch to move from the first position to the second position when the amount of time that the call may proceed has expired.

4. (Original) The device of claim 3, wherein the processor is further coupled to the telephone line, is further configured to interpret number tones transmitted through the telephone line, and is further configured to control the position of the switch based on whether a dialed number begins with a 1 thereby indicating a long distance call such that the processor moves the switch from the first position to the second position only when the call is long distance and when the amount of time that the call may proceed has expired.

5. (Original) The device of claim 3, wherein the memory also stores telephone numbers, and wherein the processor is further coupled to the telephone line, is further configured to interpret number tones transmitted through the telephone line, and is further configured to control the position of the switch based on whether a dialed number is a telephone number stored in memory such that the processor moves the switch from the first position to the second position only when the call is to a number stored in memory and when the amount of time that the call may proceed has expired.

6. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the memory stores an individual time reference for each stored telephone number and wherein the processor refers to the individual time reference for the dialed number when determining when to move the position of the switch.

7. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein the time reference is an interval of time when a call may not proceed and wherein the processor causes the switch to move to the second position during the interval in response to a dialed number.

8. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein the processor is further coupled to the telephone line, is further configured to interpret number tones transmitted through the telephone line, and is further configured to control the position of the switch based on whether a dialed number begins with a 1 thereby indicating a long distance call such that the processor causes the switch to move to the second position only when the dialed number is long distance during the interval.

9. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein the memory also stores telephone numbers, and wherein the processor is further coupled to the telephone line, is further configured to interpret number tones transmitted through the telephone line, and is further configured to control the position of the switch based on whether a dialed number is a telephone number stored in memory such that the processor causes the switch to move to the second position only when the dialed number is a number stored in memory during the interval.

10. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein the processor is further coupled to the telephone line, is further configured to interpret number tones transmitted through the telephone line, and is further configured to cause the switch to remain in the first position during the interval when the dialed number is 911 but move to the second position during the interval for any other dialed number.

11. (Original) The device of claim 2, further comprising a keypad and wherein the processor is configured to receive the time reference through the keypad and store the time reference in the memory.

12. (Original) The device of claim 3, further comprising an annunciator operatively coupled to the processor and wherein the processor is further configured to activate the annunciator to provide a warning that the call will be ended based upon the occurrence of a time reference for warning that occurs earlier in time than the time reference for moving the switch to the second position.

13. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the annunciator is an audio circuit.

14. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 13, ~~further comprising wherein the delay input element comprises~~ a button operatively coupled to the processor and wherein the processor delays moving the switch to the second position after the occurrence of the time reference when the button is depressed after the annunciator has activated.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling telephone usage, comprising:
determining a time;
comparing the time to a time reference;
completing a circuit between a telephone line and a telephone to allow a phone call to proceed when the time is different than the time reference; ~~and~~
signaling the impending obstructing of the circuit between the telephone line and the telephone when the time is almost equal to the time reference, and;
receiving an input from a delay input device indicating a desire to delay obstructing the circuit; and
~~delaying the obstructing of the circuit by activating a delay device when the time is equal to the time reference and obstructing of the circuit has been indicated.~~
16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the time reference is an amount of time that a call may proceed.
17. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
comparing a dialed number to a stored telephone number; and
obstructing the circuit only when the dialed number is the stored telephone number and when the time is equal to the time reference.
18. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
detecting whether a dialed number begins with a 1; and
obstructing the circuit only when the dialed number begins with a 1 and when the time is equal to the time reference.
19. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the time reference is an interval of time when a call may not proceed.
20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising:
comparing a dialed number to a stored telephone number; and
obstructing the circuit only when the dialed number is the stored telephone number and when the time is within the time reference.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising:
detecting whether a dialed number begins with a 1; and
obstructing the circuit only when the dialed number begins with a 1 and when the time is within the time reference.
- 22-28. (Cancelled)
29. (New) A method of controlling telephone usage, comprising:
determining a time;
comparing the time to a time reference, wherein the time reference is an amount of time that a call may proceed;
completing a circuit between a telephone line and a telephone to allow a phone call to proceed when the time is different than the time reference;
signaling the impending obstructing of the circuit between the telephone line and the telephone when the time is almost equal to the time reference;
receiving an input from a delay input device indicating a desire to delay obstructing the circuit;
delaying the obstructing of the circuit.
comparing a dialed number to a stored telephone number;
obstructing the circuit when the dialed number is the stored telephone number and when the time is equal to the time reference;
detecting whether a dialed number begins with a 1; and
obstructing the circuit when the dialed number begins with a 1 and when the time is equal to the time reference.
30. (New) The method of claim 29, further comprising:
comparing the dialed number to an emergency telephone number;
preventing obstructing of the circuit when the dialed number is the emergency telephone number.